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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies gave extensive coverage October 16 to the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China currently being held in Beijing, in which Chinese President Hu Jintao called for a peace agreement with Taiwan and a termination of cross-strait hostilities on the basis of the one-China principle. News coverage also focused on Taiwan's UN referendum, and on a front-page story in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" Monday, which quoted a former martial arts movie star as saying that former KMT authorities had asked him to assassinate former DPP chairman Hsu Hsin-liang, who escaped to the United States for a decade to avoid political imprisonment during the martial law era.

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a "Liberty Times" editorial said Chinese President Hu Jintao's remarks about having the entire Chinese people decide on Taiwan's future has posed a serious challenge to the Taiwan people. An op-ed in the pro-unification "United Daily News," however, said Beijing has decided to "cope with the shifting cross-strait situation by sticking to a fundamental principle." An editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" criticized Hu's remarks and said "there is no room for 'dialogue' in a situation where the 'final solution' is imposed as the precondition for talks." End summary.

A) "Why Does the Future of Taiwan, an Independent Sovereignty, Have to Be Determined by the Chinese People?"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] editorialized (10/16):

"... Taiwan is not China's territory, nor are the Taiwan people Chinese. Hu Jintao's four 'Nevers' and the 'entire Chinese people' [rhetoric] are nothing but excuses aimed at covering up its evil ambition to annex Taiwan. All the movements to turn Taiwan into a normal country, including name change, writing of a new constitution and the island's UN bid, are efforts to uphold Taiwan's sovereignty and to put the Taiwan people's fundamental human rights into practice. Such moves are by no means attempts to 'split Taiwan from its motherland.' Taiwan is not affiliated with China, the Republic of China, or the People's Republic of China, so how can it be 'split from' [China]? ...

"Hu's exaggerated remarks today about having the 'entire Chinese people' decide on Taiwan's future pose a serious challenge to the Taiwan people. In order for Taiwan to survive and for the international community to understand the truth, we must quickly remove the facade of the Republic of China, so that it will not bring disaster to Taiwan after having been a parasite on the island."

B) "In Consideration of the Internal and External Climates, Hu [Jintao] [Decides to] Cope with Shifting [Cross-Strait] Situation by Sticking to a Fundamental Policy [toward Taiwan]"

Professor Chao Chun-shan of Tamkang University's Institute of China Studies, opined in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (10/16):

"... As a result, whether it is based on consideration of the 'internal' or 'external' situations, Beijing will surely believe that the best option for its current strategy toward Taiwan is to 'cope with a shifting situation by sticking to a fundamental principle.' In particular, given that Taiwan's internal situation is becoming treacherous and changeable depending on the campaign [rhetoric] in the run-up to next year's presidential election, 'going farther and faring worse,' so Beijing has effectively tossed a hot potato to Taiwan and the United States. ...

"It is noteworthy that even though Hu Jintao did not make any harsh remarks against Taiwan's referendum to 'join' or 'rejoin' the UN, he emphasized that 'any issues concerning China's sovereignty and its territorial integrity must be jointly decided by the entire Chinese people, including our compatriots in Taiwan.' Hu's statement has clearly indicated that Beijing deems Taiwan's UN referendum as a move to 'alter the status quo unilaterally,' and he hinted that the Chinese people also share the rights in deciding on this matter.

"For the United States, accepting such a hot potato is indeed misery beyond description. The United States surely hopes to maintain the status quo across the Taiwan Strait, but the problem is that it can neither convince Beijing that Taiwan will not move toward independence, nor can it assure Taiwan that Beijing will not use force against the island. Hu's proposal to 'discuss a formal end to the state of hostility between the two sides, reach a peace agreement, and construct a framework for peaceful development of cross-Strait relations' was meant for the ears of Americans only. Beijing's attempt to express 'sincerity' for seeking peace was aimed at forcing Washington to impose pressure on Taiwan, in the hope that

Taiwan's campaign for the 'UN referendum' will not bring the two sides of the Taiwan Strait to the brink of a precipice. We judge that there must be U.S. factors behind Hu's decision to handle the 'UN referendum' 'coldly' in his remarks. Perhaps Beijing and Washington have reached a certain tacit agreement on this matter, forcing Hu to 'go slowly' at this critical moment. ..."

#### C) "Hu Sends Message against Democracy"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (10/16):

"The Democratic Progressive Party government correctly dismissed the latest remarks on cross-Strait relations made by People's Republic of China President Hu Jintao. Speaking to the delegates attending CCP's 17th Congress in Beijing's Great Hall of the People, Hu declared that the PRC would never waver on its 'one-China' principle, which posits that Taiwan is part of the PRC, and would also not give up on efforts to seek 'peaceful unification' of Taiwan into the PRC and would brook no compromise with so-called 'Taiwan independence.'

"The reason why Hu's statement is absolutely not a 'peace offer' lies in its making it a condition of discussion that 'an agreement to end hostilities' on prior agreement with Beijing's 'one-China principle.' Agreement with this principle, which explicitly posits that Taiwan is part of China, would be equivalent to surrendering Taiwan's sovereignty and thus the right of our people for democratic self-determination of our national status and internal affairs even before negotiations began. ... The fact of the matter is that there is no room for 'dialogue' in a situation where the 'final solution' is imposed as the precondition for talks or unless a Quisling government in Taiwan agrees to compromise on the 'one-China principle' and sacrifice our sovereignty and democracy. ...

"Hence, the question of Taiwan identity remains the most fundamental issue in the upcoming presidential elections precisely because the stance of the various candidates on Taiwan's identity as either a 'democratic independent state' as maintained by the DPP, or as comprising both Taiwan and China as upheld by the KMT, will

naturally influence the likely actions to be taken by the future national leader in the face of Beijing's annexation drive."

WANG